

Hot Technologies, Strategic Choices For VARs

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Software is sizzling. Where should you place your bets? Following are the top 10 software technologies that your peers sell or plan to sell in the coming year, according to *VARBusiness'* exclusive 2005 State of Software survey.

1. ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE Computer viruses remain the scourge of corporate America. Stopping them is a huge solution-provider opportunity, judging by the number of those surveyed (55 percent) who placed antivirus software at the top of their lists of products they sell.

Symantec--Norton AntiVirus 2005

Trend Micro--PC-cillin 2005

McAfee--VirusScan 9.0

grisoft--AVG Anti-Virus Pro 7.0

2. DATABASE/DATA MANAGEMENT This venerable piece of infrastructure is part and parcel of nearly every software project. Consider this statistic: More than half of the readers we surveyed have plans to sell or recommend databases and data-management software to customers. And the market promises to get even hotter later this year with the anticipated rollout of Microsoft's next version of SQL Server 2005.

Oracle--Oracle Database 10g

IBM--DB2 Universal Database

Microsoft--SQL Server

3. FIREWALL SOFTWARE Shoring up the corporate network--inside and out--from attack plays a crucial role in our readers' businesses. Half of them push firewalls as part of their software strategy.

Zone Labs--zoneAlarm Security suite 5.5

Trend Micro--PC-cillin Internet Security 2005

F-Secure--Internet Security 2005

McAfee--Internet Security Suite 2005

Symantec--Norton Internet Security 2005

4. WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEMS While Microsoft's long-awaited Longhorn operating system hasn't yet dazzled VARs with its business potential (only 22 percent of those surveyed say they are currently prepping their customers' infrastructure for the looming OS), VARs are much more enthusiastic about selling the current Windows flavor.

Microsoft--Windows Server 2003

5. ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE Pretty basic stuff. But every company needs some form of accounting/financial-management software to help run its business, and clearly VARs find it a stable source of revenue. Nearly half of those surveyed play in the bean-counting arena.

Microsoft--Microsoft Business Solutions products (Great Plains 8.0, Navision, Solomon, Axapta)

Oracle--Oracle E-Business Suite Financials

Sage Software--Sage BusinessVision and Sage ACCPAC ERP
SAP--SAP Business One

6. OFFICE-PRODUCTIVITY SOFTWARE Another software staple. Microsoft is sitting pretty with a 90 percent market share in this category, but there are options around open source and Sun's StarOffice product suite. VARs have a migration opportunity around the bend, too, with Microsoft's planned release of Office 2005 later this year.

Microsoft--Office System 2003
Sun Microsystems--StarOffice

7. SECURITY APPLICATIONS Judging by the number of appearances on this list, security software clearly remains one of the hottest segments out there for VARs. AV software and firewalls get their own nod. Rounding out the field of security applications includes such software as intrusion-detection and strong user encryption, antispam and antispymware.

These companies offer a variety of applications:

Symantec
McAfee
Trend Micro
Computer Associates

8. SOFTWARE/WEB DEVELOPMENT TOOLS Software-development tools have gotten easier to use and much better able to deliver useful, less clunky applications quickly to the Web. VARs are both selling tools and using them to build solutions for their customers.

Microsoft--Visual Studio.Net (2005 version expected before year's end) **IBM Rational**--Rational Rose XDE Developer Plus
Oracle--Oracle Developer Suite
BEA--WebLogic Workshop
Macromedia--Dreamweaver MX 2004

9. CRM SOFTWARE Once the butt of every shelfware joke, CRM has come a long way, particularly with the advent of software-as-a-service vanguards such as Salesforce.com. One-third of the VARs we surveyed are selling or implementing CRM software, both packaged and services-based.

Siebel--Siebel CRM and Siebel CRM On Demand
Microsoft--Microsoft CRM
SAP--MySAP CRM
Oracle--Oracle E-Business Suite Customer Relationship Management
Salesforce.com--Salesforce.com (various services)

10. LINUX Though still cautious, an increasing number of VARs are making Linux--and other open-source software--part of their software business. In the government sector, where cost is king and the lowest bidder wins the project, Linux interest is particularly high.

Red Hat--Red Hat Enterprise Linux
Novell--SuSE Linux Enterprise Server